THE ORTHODOX WORD

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SAINT PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

Hieromonk Seraphim Rose, instructing at the New Valaam Theological Academy.

From this day, from this hour,
from this minute, let us strive
to love God above all,
and fulfill His holy will.

THE ORTHODOX WORD

For the Mission of True Orthodox Christianity

Established with the blessing of His Eminence the late *John (Maximovitch)*, Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

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The Literary Inheritance of Father Seraphim Rose

by Damascene Christiensen

Father Seraphim was gifted with a brilliant mind. While still a young man, he began a conscious and determined quest for truth, always trying to cut through the ostensible aspect of things to find their true nature. The reasons for his quest were not the same as those of so many secular philosophers who merely close in upon themselves and become egotistically enveloped in their own impersonal abstractions, or who are satisfied with placing absolute trust in something transient. His quest was for truth which could have practical application on his life. But for him that truth could not be a relative one, dependent on circumstance or cultural perspective; it had to be something eternal to which one could devote one's whole life and being.

Even at a relatively young age. Father Seraphim could see through the hypocrisy of many modern values. For this reason, he turned his attention to the counter-cultural poets and writers of the late 1950's who were rebelling against the shallow materialism of their day. These writers vainly tried to provide an adequate alternative to this materialism by acquiring transplanted forms of Oriental mysticism and clothing them in terms of Western psychology. The main spokesman of this new movement in the West was Alan Watts, under whom Father Seraphim studied for a time. If Father Seraphim had relied only on his intellect, perhaps

he would have remained ensnared in the refined yet ultimately impersonal Zen Buddhist world-view that Watts propagated. Fortunately, Father Seraphim had a great soul and a sensitive heart as well as a brilliant mind. It was for this reason that when he first walked into an Orthodox cathedral, he immediately sensed something different about it: he became conscious of a spiritual, *personal* warmth that he had not encountered from his Protestant and Buddhist background. He said later of this experience: "When I walked into that cathedral, I felt as if I had walked into my home." The Church remained his home until his dying day.

Father Seraphim's full awakening to the great depth of spirituality and theology found in Orthdoxy, was to come a few years after his initial discovery of the Church. One literary figure that facilitated this awakening was Dostoyevsky, from whose writings Father Seraphim began to perceive the religious spirit of Holy Russia. He had previously considered German philosophy to be the most exalted; but, as he began to grasp the expression of the Russian soul, he found it much deeper and closer to the truth.

Father Seraphim responded to his introduction to Holy Orthodoxy with a degree of fervor that is very rare among Orthodox Christians today. But equally important was the singleness of purpose according to which

he directed his zeal. This sobriety came to a large extent from his habit of weighing the authenticity of something against its external appearance.

The results of Father Seraphim's devotion to the *genuine* Patristic and monastic tradition of Orthodox spirituality have been accessible not only to those whom he personally knew and counseled, but also to those serious followers of Christ who have benefited from his published writings and translations. Father Seraphim had the conviction that since there are so many essential Orthodox writings which are not available to modern readers whose souls are seeking God, these texts should be given to the people before it is too late. Before he died, Father Seraphim produced a great amount of translations and original writings, many of which are still unpublished.

Father Seraphim's major literary accomplishment was his compilation of material for 100 issues of "The Orthodox Word," which he edited seventeen years. Serializations of Fr. Seraphim's writings from this missionary periodical were compiled into two of his valuable achievements: *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future* and *The Soul After Death.* Both books are one-of-a-kind. The former book provides an Orthodox understanding of new religious phenomena in the United States in light of future world events. It is indispensable not only for Orthodox Christians trying to retain the Patristic world-view amidst a confusing array of pagan and pseudo-Christian worship practices, but also for those non-Orthodox who are becoming disillusioned with the shallow self-worship to be found in much of the American religious expression. Father Seraphim's other main original work, *The Soul After Death*, sets forth the true Orthodox teaching of the after-life which is unknown to most contemporary Christians, including Orthodox. While this book was being serialized in the "Orthodox Word," Father Seraphim was subjected to much slander from critics who tried to make the Church Fathers conform with their own ideas, instead of vice-versa. Father Seraphim endured this criticism patiently, and it may even be said that the writing of this book was one of the ways in which he prepared himself for the after-life.

Being a disciple of Blessed John Maximovitch, Father Seraphim wrote the first biography of his spiritual instructor. Included in the book is an Akathist written by Father Seraphim for Archbishop John. This moving service reveals the love and reverence with which Father Seraphim regarded Blessed John, whom he called a "wonderworker of the latter times."

Father Seraphim is also remembered for having created a service to Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky, in which he expressed his personal devotion and adoration for that saint. The service can be found in the last chapter of the lengthy biography, *Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky*, which Father Seraphim translated and edited. After the publication of this book, the service to Paisius was translated into Slavonic and was used on Mt. Athos during the local canonization ceremony of the Holy Elder.

The spiritual insight that is revealed in Father Seraphim's original Church services is also apparent in those that he translated and supplemented. It was the purity of soul vouchsafed to Father Seraphim that enabled him to render such beautiful English versions of the services to Saint Herman, Blessed Xenia, and the New Martyrs. The first two of these were published in their own volumes, while the third will appear in a future issue of "The Orthodox Word."

The other published works that Father Seraphim translated and edited include: (1) *The Northern Thebaid*—the lives of monastic saints of Northern Russia, (2) *The Restoration of the Orthodox Way of Life*—inspiring passages from the writings of Archbishop Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo, (3) *The Sin of Adam*—Saint Symeon the New Theologian's homilies on the fall from paradise and our redemption through Jesus Christ, (4) *The Little Russian Philokalia, Volume 1*—the spiritual instructions of Saint Seraphim of Sarov, (5) *The Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*—Archbishop John's treatise which clearly sets forth the Orthodox theology concerning the Theotokos, *Blessed Athanasia*—the life of a holy woman who sought spiritual guidance from Saint Seraphim of Sarov, and (7) *Maria of Olonets*—the story of a righteous desert-dweller of the northern Russian forests.

As mentioned earlier, the balance of Father Seraphim's work remains unpublished. Father Seraphim had plans for publishing books covering a wide range of topics. He didn't live to see many of these plans come to fruition, but we may be consoled with the fact that at least twelve more of his books still have the potential of being made available to the public. *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, an inspiring book that Father Seraphim said should be "the textbook of all contemporary Orthodox Christians," will be distributed within the next few months. This book, which Father Seraphim translated and edited, is the most extensive work ever published by the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood.

The next of Father Seraphim's translations that waits to be published is Fr. Michael Pomazansky's *Dogmatic Theology*. This is a standard source of Orthodox theology, the original Russian version of which is used by Holy Trinity Seminary in Jordanville, N.Y. It was written by the last surviving graduate of a pre-revolution Russian theological academy, that of Kiev.

Father Seraphim has also translated, edited, and augmented I.M. Kontzevitch's *Patrology*. This work, which is another compilation of material from "The Orthodox Word," includes the lives and teachings of such revered Church Fathers as St. John Cassian, St. Macarius the Great, and Abba Dorotheos of Gaza.

One topic that interested Father Seraphim greatly was the Orthodox teaching on the Apocalypse. He therefore undertook the task of translating Archbishop Averky's book, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, to which he added a lengthy and illuminating introduction concerning scriptural interpretation. The beginning of this work is included in the 100th issue of "The Orthodox Word," and the remainder is prepared for printing.

Father Seraphim also had another literary goal: to present a group of Byzantine saints whose lives elucidate the Orthodox understanding of the invisible realm of demons and angels. Before he died, Father Seraphim was able to recount the lives of five such saints and publish them separately in "The Orthodox Word." It is hoped that these will soon be published together, along with an introduction on demonology, as Father Seraphim had wished.

Father Seraphim believed that much essential information concerning the practice and purpose of the Typicon is unknown to many Orthodox Christians and should be made available in book form. Nearly all of a short but succinct book on the Typicon, which is exclusively Father Seraphim's original work, has already been written and now needs to be printed.

One of Father Seraphim's most significant contributions to "The Orthodox Word" was his commentary on the teaching of Blessed Augustine. The importance of this commentary was verified when Abbot Herman visited Mt. Athos and was thanked by the monks there for having published an article which gave Blessed Augustine a place in Orthodox theology. Father Seraphim intended to have the chapters on Blessed Augustine constitute the third book in the series of "Orthodox Theological Texts,"

along with *The Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God* and *The Sin of Adam.*

Another of Father Seraphim's projects was to write about great men of our own generation who have directly handed down the teachings of the last Holy Elders of Russia. He finished chapters about the lives and legacies of six such godly men: Archbishop Averky, I.M. Kontzevich, I.M. Andreyev, Archbishop Andrew, Father Michael Pomazansky, and Fr. Nicholas Deputatov. These chapters will hopefully be published soon, under the tentative title: *Modern Links with Holy Fathers.* A seventh chapter will posthumously be added to Father Seraphim's work: a chapter about Father Seraphim himself, who is unquestionably a modern (and the first American-born) link with the Holy Fathers.

Father Serphim drew much of the inspiration for his own faith from the lives of the righteous ones, especially the monastic saints. He was fascinated not only with the saints of Eastern Christendom, but also with those of the pre-schism West. Like his beloved Archbishop John Maximovitch, Father Seraphim saw in the monastic saints of Gaul, too often overlooked by most Orthodox Christians, a spirit similar to that of both the Egyptian Desert Fathers and the monks of Russia's Northern Thebaid. Consequently, he included the lives of these monastic saints in many issues of "The Orthodox Word." He edited an unpublished translation of St. Gregory of Tours' *Vita Patrum*, which is, in essence, a history of monasticism in the "Thebaid of the Gauls." Fourteen chapters of this twenty-chapter work have already been printed in "The Orthdox Word," along with Father Seraphim's own all-encompassing introduction. Since this book has yet to be printed in its entirety in English, the St. Herman Brotherhood expects to publish it along with Father Seraphim's other works.

In addition, the second, third, and fourth volumes of *The Little Philokalia* await publication. The second volume, which has already been typeset, consists of Father Seraphim's translation of the counsels of Abbot Nazarius. The teachings of Paisius Velichkovsky, also translated and edited by Father Seraphim, now exist in manuscript form and will comprise the third volume. *The Spiritual Treasury of St. Herman of Alaska* is the title of the upcoming fourth volume.

Before the foundation of the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Father Seraphim devoted a number of years to writing a major philo-

sophical work, which he entitled *The Kingdom of Man and the Kingdom of God*. This enlightening book categorically describes how mankind has deviated from God's wisdom and divine will through nihilism, humanism, and romantic aestheticism. Basically, it is a philosophical survey of apostasy. Father Seraphim postponed the publication of this book in order to pursue more urgent literary ambitions. With sufficient financial support, the book may finally be made accessible to those interested in how Western Civilization has substituted the worship of Man in place of the worship of God.

Father Seraphim wrote a considerable amount of material on the Patristic interpretation of *Genesis*, a topic on which he gave several lectures at the 1981 St. Herman Summer Pilgrimage. He was planning to complete a book jointly with Father Alexey Young, and his own portion was close to completion at the time of his repose. Because of the current controversy between the fundamentalist Protestants and the evolutionists, both of whom are alienated from the Orthodox Patristic tradition, this book, when published, should be much appreciated by those looking for a straightforward presentation of the true Christian doctrine of Creation.

Lastly, the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood has in its possession about 35 cassette tapes of Father Seraphim's lectures. Father Seraphim did much missionary work during his life, traveling to various colleges, parishes, and conferences. We are fortunate that many of these inspiring missionary lectures have been recorded. An equal number of tapes have preserved the informative lectures given by Father Seraphim for the New Valaam Theological Academy at the St. Herman Summer Pilgrimages. Both the missionary and the pilgrimage tapes will be transcribed and published in "The Orthodox Word," and perhaps in a separate anthology.

The legacy of Father Seraphim, which will manifest itself both in the publication of his complete writings and in the future struggles of his spiritual children, has only begun to be realized. Father Seraphim often quoted this statement of his heavenly protector, Saint Seraphim of Sarov: "Save your own soul and thousands around you will be saved." The unremitting efforts which Father Seraphim exerted in order to spread the authentic tradition of Orthodox Christianity through books and articles have already served to edify thousands of people in the United States and overseas. May the publication of his remaining works serve to enrich the spiritual lives of thousands more and awaken those outside the Church to the true Faith.

THE CHURCH SERVICE IN HONOR OF

St. Paisius Velichkovsky

by Hieromonk Seraphim Rose

The significance of St. Paisius, as the initiator of the revival of patristic texts, has yet to be fully acknowledged by the Orthodox Church. His inestimable service in spreading texts on genuine spiritual life is only now reaching the English-speaking world. This summer on Mt. Athos, two bishops celebrated his memory on St. Elias' day—the feast day of the main church in the skete dedicated to St. Elias which St. Paisius founded.

All Mt. Athos Saints, listed and unlisted in the codex of the "Mt. Athos Patericon," have been recognized as God-pleasers not through ecclesiastical decrees, but simply through their local veneration on the Holy Mountain. Even before being formally canonized, St. Paisius was likewise crowned by the Orthodox spirit of other-worldliness which penetrates the holy Athonite traditions.

The Church service to Blessed Paisius, printed below, was composed by the late Hieromonk Seraphim Rose who was largely responsible for translating, printing, and writing portions of a major book, *The Life of Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky*. This work inspired in him a true understanding and love for St. Paisius and the patristic roots of Orthodox piety to which the Saint calls us. The service is partially based on fragmentary notes received from Niamets Monastery, apparently composed by Paisian disciples soon after their great Elder's repose. Translated into Slavonic from English, it was used on Mt. Athos for the first Church glorification of this important Saint whose veneration, it is hoped, together with his works, will soon spread throughout the rest of the Orthodox world.

On the 20th of August (o.s.) of this year, Father Hieromonk Seraphim Rose passed to the Lord Whom he intensely sought throughout his life, and Whom he so conscientiously served ever since his conversion. He had a brilliant mind and a genuinely loving heart that knew well God's hierarchy of values. His sense of sobriety and creativity enabled him to produce an abundant crop of spiritual fruit for God, Who has chosen him already as an intercessor for us, grieving members of his spiritual family.

November 15

The Repose of St. Herman of Alaska, and St. Paisius Velichkovsky

Vespers: on "Lord I have cried", 5 Stichera to St. Herman, and 3 to St. Paisius, in Tone 8:

O offspring of Poltava,* of a priestly race,* from thy youth thou didst love silence* and didst read most diligently the divine books* of the Sacred Scripture and the Holy Fathers,* and from them was born in thee zeal to emulate the life of angels,* preparing the soil of thy heart* for the God-inspired word of the New Theologian Symeon* —to flee the world and endure every want and discomfort* for the sake of the soul's salvation;* and thus thou didst find the narrow path* that leadeth to salvation.

O Paisius our Father,* when thou didst nourish the thought of monastic life* thou didst despise every hypocrisy,* and vow never to be a monk in name and not in deed,* never to enjoy bodily convenience, glory, and ease,* but ever to dwell in obedience and humility,* in poverty and good-hearted endurance,* cutting off thine own will* and diligently keeping the commandments of Christ.* Thereby thou didst travel the sure path* laid down by the Holy Fathers* and acquire the grace to live purely in the sight of God.

O God-guided Paisius,* thou didst leave thy native land* and abandon outward learning,* discovering a better school in the monastic life,* and through

it acquiring the wisdom that doth not fade* and finding riches in thy poverty,* gathering like a wise bee* the nectar of the patristic teaching* from blossoms both near and far* and making of it a most sweet honey of divine instruction* whereby to nourish and fill thy native Russia* and all who venerate thy memory.

Tone 6:

Ascending to the height of virtues, thou didst labor in the monastic life, O our Father Paisius, teaching, chastising and exhorting not to disdain the God-pleasing path. Being thyself zealous, thou didst emulate the life of the ancient saints, being to all an example of goodness. Thou didst endure many misfortunes, until by much patience and struggle and love, having left us many testimonies from the Holy Scripture, thou didst convince all to travel this path.

Thou wast a skilled physician and didst treat those who came to thee with easy medicine, not reproaching them for the attack of the disease, but as one skilled in patience, thou didst place in their hearts the desire not to approach the harmful thing, placing thy medicine into the very depths of the wound, thou didst completely heal them, dismissing them in joy and peace, that they might fearlessly come to thy treatment, O our Father Paisius.

In thee, O our Father Paisius, the word did fall on good soil, giving fruits a hundredfold of love for God and neighbor, of keeping Christ's commandments, of unceasing mental prayer; O come let us glorify this wondrous struggler, who watered by many tears the fragrance of Christ which was in his heart, and which by the action and grace of God grew and blossomed marvellously.

"Glory" *to St. Herman;* "Both now" *in Tone 4:*

Isaiah, rejoice,* receive the Word of God,* prophesy to the maiden Mary,* a bush that burneth with flame* and is not burnt by the dawning of divinity.* Adorn thyself, O Bethlehem,* open thy gates, O Eden; and, O Magi, go to see salvation wrapped in swaddling clothes,* Him Whom the star above the cave hath shown,* the Lifegiver,* the Lord Who saveth the human race.

Lity—to St. Herman, then to St. Paisius, in Tone 6, to the Special Melody "O Angelic Powers":

In Thee, O our Father Paisius,* the word didst fall on good soil,* giving fruits a hundredfold:* of love for God and neighbor,* of keeping Christ's

commandments,* of unceasing mental prayer:* O come let us glorify this wondrous struggler,* who watered by many tears* the fragrance of Christ which was in his heart* and which by the action and grace of God grew and blossomed marvellously.

Aposticha, to St. Herman; "Both now", *in Tone 3:*
O Joseph, say to us:* How is it that thou leadest to Bethlehem with child* the Virgin whom thou didst receive from the holy places.* I, he saith, have searched the Prophets* and received a reply from an angel,* and I am convinced that Mary will give birth unutterably to God,* to worship Whom the Magi are coming from the East,* serving with precious gifts.* O Lord Who hast become incarnate for us, Glory be to Thee.

Lauds, to St. Herman; "Both Now", *Tone 8:*
Receive, O Bethlehem, the metropolis of God:* for the unsetting light cometh to thee to be born.* O angels, be astonished in the heavens:* O men, glorify upon earth:* O Magi, from Persia bring most glorious gifts:* O shepherds, piping, sing the thrice-holy hymn.* Let every breath praise the Creator of all.

Troparion, Tone 4:
O Paisius, the joy of Russia,* the boast of Athos and the wonder of Moldavia,* by thy Divinely-inspired teaching* thou dost direct us to the fount of wisdom and salvation.* And now, enjoying in heaven the vision of Christ God,* entreat Him that He may grant us His great mercy* and save our souls.

Matins, Canon in Tone 8. Acrostic: PAISIUS, LOVER OF THE FATHERS, DO I PRAISE.

Canticle I

Irmos: When Israel passed through the water as dry land . . .
Paisius, our father, forgive me, thy poor disciple who have transgressed thy commandments and disdained thy holy will, doing my own will and that of the devil; and in thy kindness and meekness entreat God to grant me time for repentance, and words to hymn thy holy labors.

All the Fathers hast thou loved and venerated, and their sacred writings studied, drawing from each sweet nectar for thine own mellifluous teaching. Teach me also not to disdain their words, but to receive them with a heart ready to struggle unto salvation.

In Abba Dorotheus thou didst learn the beginning of the monastic path, copying out his book in thy youth and remembering its lessons to thine old age; help me also, O holy Father, not to forget the beginning of my renunciation, but to bring forth fruits in old age.

Theotokion: Seeing thyself entreated, O Queen of all, by the prayers of Thy holy Paisius, preserve Thy flock inaccessible to every attack, for we ever pray to Thee, O Intercessor for the world.

Canticle III

Irmos: O Lord, Creator of the vault of heaven . . .
In the fervor of thy youth thou didst seek out monastic teachers on long journeys for the sake of God, finding in the end thy teachers in the Holy Fathers. May we too have them as our instructors on the path of life.

Under thy protection have I lived, but of all thy disciples I alone am unworthy to behold thy face. Have pity on me, O blessed Father, and in thy goodness entreat Christ God to have mercy even on me, the least of thy sheep.

Seeing thyself ever as dust and ashes, thou didst bend the mental knees of thy heart before the greatness of God's glory, begging enlightenment of thy mind, never believing thyself to have attained the goal, but ever pressing forward in thy love for God.

Theotokion: Like Elias, who first dwelt on Carmel, so didst thou labor on the Mount of Athos, desiring to be apart with God; and being illuminated by visions from Him, thou wast manifest as pleasing to the Pure Mother of God, crying out to Her, Rejoice, together with the Archangel.

Sedalen, Tone 5:
Once in the year didst thou leave thy cell, O Father Paisius, and didst go about the dwellings of thy disciples, travelling and observing, and signing each of their cells at the setting of the sun, and didst pray with tears, entrusting them to God and saying: O Lord, keep this small flock and preserve it from the wolves who destroy it.

Canticle IV

Irmos: I have heard, O Lord . . .

Of poverty and labor and extreme want didst thou learn from thy early struggles on the Holy Mountain, O Father Paisius, learning thereby to have mercy on human weakness and to build a foundation of humility for thy monastic life.

Venturing into foreign lands, thou didst come to the God-preserved land of Moldavia, where, having received the seed of the desert-loving life, thou didst plant a forest of disciples who spread it to the ends of Russia, glorifying thy name.

Ever invoking the name of Jesus, thou didst beat the invisible enemies with it, as St. John of the Ladder teaches; thus didst thou overcome the wiles of the demons and ascend to the vision of God.

Theotokion: Renouncing the world for the sake of inward peace, Thou didst dwell in the Holy of Holies, O Most Pure One, in sacred silence and unceasing prayer, ascending from activity to Divine vision; thus did our holy Father Paisius learn from Thee.

Canticle V

Irmos: Enlighten us by thy commandments, O Lord . . .

Of the constant remembrance of God thou didst learn from the great Macarius of Egypt; and following his teaching, thou didst love the Lord at all times, having in Him thine only treasure.

From Basil, thy holy teacher, thou didst learn of the three forms of monastic life, and from the young Bessarion the cutting off of thy will before thy brother; then from the Holy Fathers and thine own humility of wisdom didst thou learn to practice with thy brethren oneness in soul and mind, guiding thy rational flock to salvation.

The rank of priest thou didst consider as beyond thee, and only the insistence of thy brethren and thy spiritual fathers did persuade thee to accept it; but thus didst thou the more surely conduct thy children to salvation.

Theotokion: He Who before the ages was unutterably begotten of the Father at last came from Thy womb and deified our nature, O Virgin Mother; He it is Who hath brought out and made manifest the choirs of monastic saints.

Canticle VI

Irmos: I will pour out my prayer to the Lord . . .
Ever struggling, yet preserved by humility, thou didst ascend by the teaching of the Holy Fathers to the heights of prayer; do thou help me, who know not how to struggle or to pray, at least to cover my wretched nakedness with knowledge of my infirmity.

Following the words of Nilus, the faster of Mount Sinai, thou didst manfully force thy nature in prayer and labors; then, waiting on God's grace, thou didst attain to heavenly illumination, shining upon thy disciples.

As I behold the greatness o thy labors and the grace given thee by God, my heart doth fail within me; how can I, having disdained thy commandments, have a part with thee in eternal life? Have pity on me, thy wretched disciple, and entreat the Lord for my salvation.

Theotokion: The Master, borne on the shoulders of the frightful Cherubim, fiery upon the Throne, dwelt in Thy womb, O Pure One, and by taking flesh He deified human nature, as Paisius doth teach, superb among holy monks, O only All-hymned One.

Canticle VII

Irmos: Having arrived in Babylon from Judea . . .
Heeding the teachings of the Fathers, and filled with love for their example, thou wast manifest in the latter times as a pure fountain of their teaching; instruct us, O holy Father, how to drink from this fountain for the salvation of our souls.

Eloquent Mark of Ephesus, pillar of the Orthodox Faith, did inspire thy firm defense of Orthodoxy and thy mental warfare against the passions that darken the soul; his words did teach thee of the unceasing remembrance of Jesus in the heart, and the attainment of pure prayer.

Russia's luminary, Demetrius of Rostov, instructed thee in the practice of mental prayer and attaining the Kingdom of God within, so that thou mightest pray unto the Lord with the spirit and with the understanding also, offering a pure sacrifice unto Him.

Theotokion: Sacred Dwelling of God, O blessed Mary Who knew not wedlock, refuge of the despairing: instruct us on the path of repentance, for we ever go astray into the tracklessness of evil, angering the All-good God.

Canticle VIII

Irmos: The King of Heaven . . .

Divine Gregory the Sinaite gave warning to those who dared to ascend into visions without the grace of God, thus falling prey to imagination and deception; thou didst heed well his warning, O most blessed Father, being an example of sobriety and protecting thy flock from these temptations.

O woe is me! Having such an instructor, I remain in my sins and carelessness. Show thy love for me, O blessed Father, I entreat thee, and draw me up from the depths of despondency.

Illness and many sores on thine own body did not prevent thee from healing those who came to thee by thy kind manner and meek words, O Father Paisius.

Theotokion: Paisius, who pleased Thee, desired to see the unutterable glory of Thy Son and God, O Thou Who gavest birth to God; wherefore, taking up His cross on his shoulders, he followed in His Life-giving and Divine footsteps.

Canticle IX

Irmos: Saved by Thee, O Pure Virgin . . .

Remaining in thy cell, in mind thou didst go about among all the brethren, reflecting on the manifold nature of their various wounds of soul and body, and applying to all a healing and pleasant medicine, O Father.

At the end of thy life didst thou translate the writings of St. Isaac on pure prayer and spiritual vision, knowing that to such elevated knowledge one can not come unless God visit him and lead him up to it by grace. Teach us also, O holy Father, to have thy humility of wisdom and not seek what is above our means.

I alone did walk in thy light and did not see thy light; I alone ate thy sweet food and did not acknowledge my feeder; I alone drank thy sweet drink and was not aware of the sweet fountain gushing from thy lips; I am the one sheep who strayed from the flock, O good shepherd. Be not embittered against me, but entreat God to grant me time for repentance.

Set me aright, O holy Father, on the path of salvation; for, having thine example and the writings of the Holy Fathers, I do not correct my wretched life. But having hope in thy love for thy disciples, I entreat thee: pray ever for thine erring disciple to the Lord of glory.

Theotokion: Eloquent lips cannot praise Thee as is due, O All-hymned One Who art above the Cherubim and all creation. Wherefore do Thou, with the divine Paisius, pray to the Master for all of us.

SERVICE TO SAINT PAISIUS

Photogogicon, Tone 3:
Enlighten us by Thy commandments, O Christ God, through the prayers of our light-bearing leader Paisius, and instruct us, O Saviour, to love Thy righteousness.

Aposticha, Tone 4: Special Melody, As Valiant as the Martyrs...:
Weep not, O brethren,* but turn your sorrow into joy,* with the spiritual trumpet* arouse the new army* to battle with the enemy,* call on our God-bearing Father Paisius,* strengthen your hearts with his instruction,* hymn and keep the righteousness of God,* glorifying the Lord in His saints.

The disciples of Paisius come together with us* and glorify the wondrous general* of the spiritual army of Christ's strugglers:* Bessarion the Moldavian, his first disciple,* John the Fingerless and the Hierarch Benjamin,* Pimen who was seen in Uncreated Light,* Theodore of Svir and Theophanes of Solovki,* and in the incorrupt Cleophas of Valaam:* all rejoice today in the triumph of their leader.

How numerous is the army of the strugglers* who followed the great Paisius* from his time up to our own:* Leonid, Moses, Anthony, and Makary, elders of Optina,* Philaret of Glinsk and the wondrous Basil in the south,* Alexis of Konevits and Basiliscus and Zossima of Siberia,* the Romanian Callinicus,* Theophanes of New Niamets,* Paisius the New of his Athonite skete,* St. Herman of Alaska,* Ignatius the Bishop,* Theodosius of Karoulia,* and Michael the last elder of Valaam:* all now pray with him in heaven for the salvation of our souls.

"Glory", *Tone 8:*
O Paisius, guide of all who labor in the spiritual life,* instruct us to keep thy teaching* and have always in our soul and heart the All-sweet Jesus,* being filled with fire from His unutterable love,* that so we may soar beyond the pleasures of this world* and attain with thee the Heavenly Kingdom.

"Both now", *same tone:*
O Lady, Accept the prayers of thy slaves,* and deliver us* from every need and sorrow.

Christ is Calling You
SEVEN LENTEN MEDITATIONS

Sermons to young people by Father George Calciu-Dumitreasa. Given at the Chapel of the Romanian Orthodox Church Seminary, Bucharest

SEVENTH MEDITATION
April 19, 1978

Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgotten; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.
Luke 7:47

WHEN I BEGAN THIS series of addresses, young friend, I did not know you. I knew that you existed, that you aspire after something which the world cannot give you, and I called to you as to my unknown brother to show you a new road to keep.

I told you of Christ and His Church, of heaven and a new earth, of death and resurrection, and above all, of the love of Jesus for you. I speak to you as a brother, not in the way I would speak to my own kin; nor do I love you with an abstract love which seeks after its object, but with a love which has found its object. For I know you and you are in my heart, as I am also in your heart. For if you have been coming here regularly to listen to me, you have done so because you have heard the voice of Jesus, that irresistible voice which has awakened you from your materialist stupor and from the atheist lethargy into which you had sunk. You heard the voice of Jesus say to you: "Come to Me!" and when

you turned to Him He put His ring upon your finger and new shoes upon your feet and the best clothes around your shoulders (Luke 15:22).

Because you came wounded and bleeding. You were oppressed by all that you had learnt about the deification of matter and by the prohibitions, raised by the fetishes of atheism, against your inner searchings. Before your eyes, blind up to that point, there shone a light more enchanting than any song of Sirena. You left behind you the ravenous land of unbelief and "husks" which you had eaten up until then (Luke 15:16). You forgot your teachers who said that this is the only food, without which you would die. And you heard the word of Jesus saying to you: *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God* (Matthew 4:4).

Friend, when did you come to feed on the word of God? And yet this is what you are doing. To obtain this Word you have renounced your rest, your comfortable peace; you have overcome obstacles and prohibitions and you have come to eat on the Word of Christ. Honor to you, my friend!

God will give His Word and His grace will be poured upon you in full. For it is written: *Everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened* (Matthew 7:8).

For your persistent asking, my courageous friend, Jesus will reward you. Because you have the courage to fight custom and the inertia with which they made you their prisoner; because you had the courage to break the barriers of prohibition raised against you—an uncrossable threshold—by the materialist ideology which believes that authoritarian demands do not need proof and that authoritarianism supplants faith; and finally because you had the courage to go forward, once released from the slavery to their doctrines, towards that which looms before you like a tangible resurrection.

And the further you advance, the better you understand that this infinite, crucified love shines for you, unique and unrepeatable man, as I called you elsewhere.

For your courage, you have received forgiveness. Do you not feel somehow in this spirit of quietness which has now been placed within you, an assurance with which you can keep on the road of obedience to Christ? It is the Grace of God which comes to you. At first this Grace visits you softly, but when as you pray you feel a fiery moment of unknown, ineffable joy sweep through your heart, and when on your knees, you feel an inexplicable affection in your soul and an imperative need to weep, know then that the Grace of Christ has visited you. Persevere, my friend, and Grace will come more and more often until it lives in you permanently. You will then experience a continuous state of Grace and the inner peace whose source is the forgiveness of Christ will revive spiritual joy which will radiate through every pore of your being. You will know the happiness of forgiveness and of forgiving.

Our life is hard when we say the earth and the heavens are mere matter, and our spirits are blind when atheism is our religion. But if, nevertheless, there exists something that can save you, my friend, before your soul is flooded with the light of faith, then it is the joy of forgiving and of being forgiven. Life in common is hard. You must know how to forgive. Not only to forgive—which can bring you the vain satisfaction of pharisaical goodness, but to know that you can be forgiven, which produces in one an utter humility.

I remember that I spoke to you about Jesus and His Church as a holy Institution, a spiritual reality whose threshold you found long ago. But you have hardly now succeeded in breaking the iron cords of certain concepts which have dragged you back. I spoke to you of churches scattered throughout this land of ours on which we walk with joyful or sorrowing feet. I have also showed you that we have resisted down the ages through our humility and glory, through our unique, Orthodox faith, which has united us with our ancestors and descendents in an indestructible relationship. That love and unity of blood and tongue have been expressed in our real history by the erecting of churches

by princes and chiefs as living letters of stone which time can never wash away. Yes, even now if we see a church demolished to make room for a beerhall, we say: "Never" with all our agonizing soul in opposition to those who believe that in destroying churches and forbidding the Word of God in schools, the press and even men's hearts, they have abolished the One by Whose mercy we live and survive.

I spoke to you about your freedom in Christ and how you should use it. I showed you that minerals do not know death nor life except in analogies—but only have one state of being; that animals have knowledge of life and death; but that you, my friend, know both life and death and above all, resurrection—even though it is forbidden for you to know this. For Christ has called you to deification. Not to the simple condition of survival, not to your present state as man; but He has risen above your human condition when He said: *Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am* (John 17:24).

These are the things that I have said to you, my young friend, and many similar things—all from the words of Christ. And for this my brethren hate me and have forbidden you to hear me—you who are thirsty for the Word of God and who want to know if you are totally condemned or if you have been chosen for a more exalted destiny, for resurrection. They closed the gates on you and they built barricades of prohibitions against you. To you who wrote in one of your letters (for each letter I have received I have taken as coming from you all), that you search for that which transcends matter and the deified immanent of today, your whole hope is to find the road of truth and the complete joy of being awakened by the One Who is the Truth, the Way and the Life. You wrote to me several days ago: "What joy to hear talks about God and about a world other than that of matter from a secular professor in a secular faculty the other day! It was like an unbelievable dream. And to understand that this layman was enlightened by a spirit of faith which was clear not only by his words but also by his whole being. Thus

I almost envy you theologians that you know and live that which we do not know and yet towards which our whole being aspires."

Or you, young professor of 33 years of age, who said: "My years in teaching I have spent in driving students from church with a stick. But now I have understood what led them there and why they returned to the church, forgiving me. I understand that if you, pupils in the first class in Seminary, believe so strongly and know so much about the deep things of the human soul, and about a world which I have forbidden to my students, then I ought to believe more than you."

Do these words not remind you of Paul on the road to Damascus? For if we admit with Albert Camus that every man passes only once over the Mount of Olives, so we ought to admit that every one of us has experienced the road to Damascus also—when the voice of Jesus resounded out to us: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad* (Acts 9:5-6).

No man is shielded from suffering. If we suffer, our suffering will be in Christ. If we forgive, we forgive because of Christ. But may truth stand before us always. "Truth before peace" is how one Polytechnic student put it as he listened to these seven addresses. And we understand by peace, not the peace of Christ of John 14:27, nor the peace between the two world wars as defined by Titulescu, but that spiritual, material accomodation for which we trample under foot our principles and justice; that state of tolerance which helps us go to bed at night with a compromise in our heart, only to wake up the next morning with a new compromise under the pillow.

And now I will read to you a statement by one of the theological students regarding the "Seven Lenten Meditations," since several statements have been taken at the Theological Institute under a forced hand and conscience. We know what a written declaration means—what a source of fear and terror it releases, especially when it is not obtained

by persuasion, as is sometimes the case. I have chosen one statement from a number of declarations given to me. This one is clearer, not more correct; for all have their own form of correctness.

"I declare that on Wednesday, April 12, at 9:00 pm, I listened to the sixth Lenten address to young people given by Fr. George Calciu-Dumitreasa, in the Radu Voda Church, Bucharest. I had also listened to the third, fourth and fifth addresses, but in other circumstances. I declare that I met on this occasion, as also during his other sermons, a large number of students from the Theological Institute, doctorate students in theology, students from other faculties whom I had never seen before and very many seminarians. The atmosphere in the church was always impressive, and I experienced genuine moments of spiritual exaltation and concentration. In respect to the content of these sermons, I declare that I am in total agreement with the ideas expressed by the Fr. Professor, who did nothing more than elucidate in a realistic way the problems which demand attention, while adhering strictly to the teachings of the Orthodox Church.

"Rev. Professor George Calciu was my teacher for a number of years at the Theological Seminary in Bucharest, from where I graduated, and he has contributed in the greatest measure to our formation as pupils into true servants of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the Church of the people."

Is it necessary to add anything? Except my homage to this student's courage, and to all of you who, trampling over instincts of survival, have placed truth before peace and have come here. Perhaps I should also add the joy that these declaraitons—both written and spoken—have brought me along with your presence in church. I should also add my sense of submissiveness to you all, for you are good and you love Jesus more than me, for without being His servants you would not have been predisposed to sacrifice your accomodation to come and express your love for Christ.

Let us pray for all our brethren who love or hate us, those who have done us harm or good, those who have forgiven us or have nor forgiven us. Let us forgive everything to everyone.

I will close, my young friend, this final word to you with a quotation from the passage of St. John Chrysostom which is read on Pascha night in every Orthodox church, for Pascha, the Day of Resurrection, is approaching. Our Joy is approaching.

Then, at Pascha, you will know that Christ is risen and that we will be risen with Him. When I say that you will know, I realize that your heart and soul will discover this certainty of resurrection which has been long within us and by whose virtue we are here.

"If any has worked from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any has arrived at the sixth hour, let him not doubt for he shall not be deprived of anything. If any has delayed until the ninth hour, let him too approach without doubting. If any has tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him also be not afraid for his lateness. The faithful Master accepts the last even as the first; He gives rest to those who arrive at the eleventh hour even as to the one who has worked from the first hour. Therefore, enter ye all into the joy of your Lord; the first as the last.

"Christ is risen, and all the angels rejoice; Christ is risen, and life reigns; Christ is risen, and the dead are no longer in the grave."

I have read these lines to you that you might know them. I have read this word because Passion Week is before us, before which every mouth is dumb. I have read these words that you might find that in the days which follow, we will live in spirit and in flesh the Calvary of Jesus. At the top of Golgotha there awaits us forgiveness and resurrection. I have read these truths to remind you that this Romanian people climb the hill of history's Golgotha, ceaselessly recreating in spirit the way of Jesus and anticipating in faith this resurrection which you, my friend and brother, will bring as a torch burning in your heart.

EIGHTH MEDITATION
Supplementary message, May 17, 1978

If I do not the works of
My Father, believe Me not.
John 10:37

I DID NOT INTEND to add this supplementary message to the "Seven Addresses to Young People", given during Lent among the students of theology. But I am forced to come back to you by internal and external pressures. Thus I will appeal in a greater measure to our sense of justice, honor and courage in this address than in my previous ones.

From the moment I decided to attack openly and publicly the problems of religious freedom, from the moment I decided to protest openly about the churches—and I mean to use the plural—I knew what would await me: persecution, terror, the tribunal, blackmail. Within a few monts I have experienced all these, excepting the fact that everything was more inhuman and more degrading than I had imagined. From that moment everything that is bound up with my being, my life and my public activity, became public property. For this reason I will divulge to you a portion of the things that have happened so that you might know what awaits you when your faith, your love of man, determines you to act in the way I have acted. I will not tell you everything, for I do not want you to believe that the face of mankind is hideous. I will tell you only that which justifies this message.

Two reproaches were brought against me—totally contradictory to each other—regarding the "Seven Addresses." On the one hand I was reproached—and the term is such a euphemism that it in fact becomes almost delicate—that my sermons were supposed to be addressed to seminarians and therefore my accusations of atheism and materialism would fall exclusively upon the teachers of the Seminary. That argument is of such a flagrantly bad intent

that it would seem a useless and harmful waste of time to occupy myself in combatting it. On the other hand some theologians reproached me for giving priority to the lay youth and therefore neglecting the young theologians in my sermons. Here I must defend myself.

I have not neglected you, my young friends and brothers. I knew that you were more faithful, more just and more kindhearted than I; that your numerous and assiduous attendance at the sermons which I preached in Radu Voda Church or on the steps there after the school directors closed it against me, has proven that you yourselves were involved in the content of the addresses and that to a great extent your views were being expressed through my mouth. Finally, an inner reason compels me to clarify certain matters concerning us theologians.

It is time, my brothers, for the words of the Saviour that "the time is coming when whoever kills you will believe he is bringing glory to God," to become an actual reality. I do not make such a statement without cause. Rather, I tell you these things because your senior teachers, the very directors of your consciences and the formers of our nation's future priests, have raised themselves up against the things I preached in the name of Jesus, against my protest at the demolition of the Enea Church and against you theologians who came to listen to truths spoken in courage and forthrightly, in spite of the prohibitions. They rose up, seized by a nobel wrath, to keep you by a tenfold force from coming during the series of Wednesdays to hear the "Seven Addresses."

They have not kept you from the temptations of the world: from drunkenness, from squabbling, or from any other sin with which the world ensnares you. In that they left you to fend for yourself. But they jumped up to stop you from listening to the word of God spoken in a new way. They were—to use a phrase from the propaganda brochures on class struggle—very vigilant. They made you write declarations against one another, becoming informers

through official statements and denouncing all those guilty of the grave crime of listening to my sermons, including yourselves. This was the splendid spiritual action by which they transformed the Theological Institute into an interrogation center. I would like to ask spiritual father Ilie Moldovan, who carried out this interrogation, if he ever took such declarations from his workmates when he was an engineer? If so, it would mean that there is a continuation of activity and that in fact it is not for theology that he is found there. If not, however, I would ask him to explain where and when he learned this system of interrogation?

He who uses the moral conscience-salve that he has his children to bring up, or justifies his action by saying that the Rector told him to take statements, has a remote-control machine inside him instead of a soul. Let us remind ourselves of the words of the Saviour from Matthew 10:37 which constitute our text today.

I know the fury with which his reverence fights against the Lord's Army—an Orthodox group of popular Christian piety who dared to put pious verse to popular melodies and non-traditional rhythms.* It would be good to understand one thing which is clear to a believing man, namely that to the extent to which false science secularizes the world, sometimes even helped by priests, to that same extent a simple faith can stretch into every area of human demonstration.

We know, however, that as risky as it is to combat official and unofficial atheism, it is equally convenient and advantageous to attack the Lord's Army when they are obliged to hold meetings in semi-obscurity which at times are brutally broken up by the police. In fact there is one

* Founded in 1927, the "Lord's Army" was abolished by the Communist government in 1947 and continues its activities underground. Its emphasis on popular revivalism has caused friction between it and the Orthodox hierarchy.

answer to the problem of the Lord's Army. Put all its members into a single congregation under the roof of the Orthodox Church, for they are pious and devout men who want to be received into the fold. Only in this way would you solve a spiritual problem. Not with violence. In spiritual matters violence only complicates things, it solves nothing. I speak of these simple men, honorable in their faith, and who ought to be brought back into the church, because they are men who burn with faith and who defend their religious belief with zeal, which is something not everyone has or wants to do.

Where was the parish priest of the Enea Church on the previously arranged night that the demolitioners came? Where were the priests of Focsani when the Party Secretary of the Region, Mr. Dobrovici (as Romanian by his name as by his actions!) destroyed this church? Would this gentleman have dared to throw the church into the air together with its servants? Be assured not! On the contrary; some of the truckdrivers and bulldozer workers showed more dignity and courage in refusing to participate in the destruction of the church. I have since learnt that for this reason four of them had their work contracts demonstratively broken. What reward was given to those who destroyed these churches and what sanctions were imposed on the priests who deserted their obligations?

The time will come, and it is not far off, when we shall know the complete list of those who signed in favor of the demolition of the Enea Church. They will be covered in shame. The time will come when we shall know the complete list of those who refused to sign, rightly considering this act of destruction a barbarous, anti-cultural act. They will be honored for their Romanian soul. All I can say now is that those who refused to sign are the most outstanding representatives of our contemporary culture, history, literature and art. Their names pronounced in public will strengthen further in us the respect which we bear towards them and will prove that only he who is a barbarian in thought could destroy the religious past of our nation to

replace it with the crippled puppet of atheism. These men have heard the words of the Saviour, even if they did not know how to decipher them with an inner sense of dignity and honor: *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* (Mark 8:37).

During the last few months I have received several intimidating phone calls from people who hide their terrorist inclinations and instincts for moral torture behind the mask of an anonymous telephone call. A whole range of threats have been made against me and my family, ranging from calls for our moral destruction to calls for our civic and physical destruction. To the degree that it becomes necessary I will make known these things publicly, so that you may all see what honor and humanitarianism these individuals possess. Some of these men set themselves up as defenders of the regime, which it seems would be threatened by my sermons (but I don't know how). Can there be any falsehood greater than this? What is strange is that these "defenders" strive to convince us that the regime which they defend is one ready to perpetrate any abuse and ready to destroy me though innocent, and my family also, for the guilt of which I have none. These things are happening during a time when I believe our regime acknowledges certain humanitarian principles which do not endorse such abuse.

I have said all this to you in passing. For I want to make these things public and cause this blackmail and moral gangsterism to cease. It draws out of me my soul's right to revenge my threatened family. I hope that in making them public these actions will be condemned and our human dignity will be increased according to the words of Jesus: *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops* (Matt. 10:27).

For my voice is not sufficient, and it must be multiplied by hundreds of your voices, that the truth of the faith and of mankind might reach the ears of all. We remain tightly united around the hierarchy of the Church and our bishops.

for without the hierarchy, the Church would be an organism without a strong skeleton. We continue in relation to them as subjects and we say to them that they are the leaders of at least fourteen million Romanian believers, and that among them are to be found the finest men who know how to unite love for one's country with the universality of Christian love, and how to unite faith with true culture.

Should they possess the awareness and should they truly be Christ's apostles on Romanian soil, then we will be their fine disciples. If one single bishop had been on our side, we would not have helped in the destruction of the Enea church, or at the worst, we would be seeing its reconstruction today. Nor would we have painfully assisted in the pulling down of the Lord's church at Focsani. We humbly plead with our bishops not to allow a profane beerhall to replace the Enea church, a beerhall where drunkenness, violence and prostitution will take place. Defend this sacred ground on which our princes walked, and may it be rebuilt whatever the cost. This is the duty of every Romanian Christian among us.

We will not cease to protest against this sacrilege and this illegality. We will never draw back from opposing any similar abuse of anti-cultural acts, such as those committed at Focsani and Bucharest. We will make these transgressions public also. It is our right to obstruct their occurrence.

And who can stop us, if Christ is with us? For what price has our life outside of Jesus, once we recognize that *Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it* (Mark 8:35); or, *Ye are the salt of the earth...the light of the world* (Matthew 5:13-14).

Each year thousands of graduates finish the faculties of medicine, engineering, law, teaching, etc. They become lost in the anonymity of the masses and of their professions. But if, in a single year, we were to see one thousand priests graduate, full of the spirit of sacrifice, priests as Christ would have them to be, then in less than one year the spiritual face of our country would be changed like that of Jesus on

Mount Tabor. For such priests sanctify the world and bring a new spirit of truth and justice, a heavenly love and Christo-centric comfort to a world of suffering.

Our people are a ripe harvest, waiting to be gathered in for Christ: *Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest* (John 4:35). But where are such worthy harvesters? Lift us your eyes and I tell you, you will see how few there really are. And the wheat is wasting in the field outside of the Kingdom of God. Be most conscientious harvesters. Forget your instincts which are overloaded by your teachers whose principles are: "I have a mother, father, sons and daughters, too large a salary to accept the sacrifice and suffering of Christ and His Church." Lift up the eyes of your spirit to the people who believe in you and for whom there exists no other spiritual salvation than in the Church of Christ.

Be harvesters! Be pastors! And above all, pray to God to give this nation good harvesters who will not love parents and children more than Christ, who seeing the multitude *was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest* (Matthew 9:36-38).

Let us pray to God for the harvest and the reapers!

Note: This sermon was to be preached on May 17, 1978, in Radu Voda Church as part of a new series of sermons announced May 10. The new series was to be on the theme of Christ and Culture. It was, however, not held because I was suspended by order of Bishops Roman Ialomiteanu, Ilie Georgescu and Octavian Popescu. Teachers at the Seminary were forced to keep watch until 10 pm that night to prevent me from preaching. Students in the Seminary and Institute were confined to their dormitories.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SECOND VISION: THE VISION OF GOD SITTING ON THE THRONE, AND THE LAMB

4:1 *After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.*

The fourth chapter contains the beginning of a new, a second vision. The depiction of a new and magnificent spectacle which opens before the gaze of St. John begins with a commandment to him to ascend through an open door in heaven so as to see "things which must be hereafter." The opening of the door signifies the revelation of the hidden mysteries of the Spirit. By the words "Come hither," the eharer is commanded to put off entirely earthly thinking and be converted to heavenly thinking.

4:2-3 *And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*

"And immediately I was in the Spirit": that is, again in a state of ecstasy, St. John saw this time God the Father Himself, sitting upon a throne. His appearance was like the precious stone jasper (a stone green like an emerald) and a sardine stone (sard, of

a fiery color). The first of these colors, green, according to the commentary of St. Andrew of Caesarea, signifies that the Divine nature is ever flourishing, life-bearing, and gives food. The second, the fiery yellow red, indicates purity and sanctity, which ever remain in God, and His threatening anger towards those who transgress His will. The union of these two colors indicates that God chastises sinners, but at the same time is always ready to forgive one who sincerely repents. The apparition of the One sitting on the throne was surrounded by a rainbow like an emerald, a stone of green color which signifies, as does also the rainbow which appeared after the Flood, the eternal mercy of God towards mankind.

The sitting on the throne itself signifies the opening of the Judgment of God which is to be revealed in the last times. This is not yet the terrible Last Judgment, but a preparatory judgment like those judgments of God which have occurred many times in the history of mankind to people who have sinned. (For example, the universal Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the destruction of Jerusalem, and many others).

The precious stones jasper and sardine, and likewise the rainbow around the throne, being a symbol of the ceasing of the wrath of God and the renewal of the world, signify that the judgment of God upon the world, that is, its fiery destruction, is to end with its renewal. This is especially indicated also by the quality of jasper to heal wounds received by the sword.

"Since in this vision he presents the Father, he does not give to Him, as previously to the Son, the signs of a bodily image, but likens and compares Him to precious stones" (St. Andrew, ch. 10; see Ezekiel 1:26-28).

4:4 *And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*

Around the throne on twenty-four other thrones sat twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. There are the most varied opinions and suppositions as to whom one must understand by these elders. One thing is

certain: that these are representatives of humanity who have pleased the Lord. Many suppose, basing themselves on the promise given to the holy Apostles (*Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*, Matt. 19:28), that by these twenty-four elders one must understand twelve representatives of Old Testament humanity—the holy patriarchs and prophets—and twelve representatives of New Testament humanity—namely, the twelve Apostles of Christ. The white garments are a symbol of purity and eternal feasting, and the golden crowns are a sign of victory over demons.

4:5 *And out of the throne proceeded lightenings and thunderings and voices.*

This indicates how frightful and terrible God is for unrepentant sinners who are unworthy of His mercy and forgiveness. (Compare the manifestation of God on Mount Sinai, Ex. 9:16.)

"But for those worthy of salvation, the lightnings and thunderings do not cause fear, but sweetness and enlightenment: the one enlightens their spiritual eyes, while the other gives pleasure to the hearing" (St. Andrew, ch. 10).

4:5 *And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.*

By these seven spirits one must understand either the seven chief angels, as St. Irenaeus interprets it, or the seven gifts of the Holy spirit which are enumerated by the holy Prophet Isaiah. (See commentary on Apocalypse 1:4.)

4:6 *And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal.*

The crystal sea, being unmoving and still, as opposed to the stormy sea seen later by St. John (Apoc. 13:1), must signify, in the opinion of many interpreters, "the multitude of the holy heavenly powers," pure and immortal (St. Andrew of Caesarea). These are the souls of men who have not been disturbed by the storms

of the sea of life, but like crystal reflect the seven colors of the rainbow, being penetrated by the seven gifts of the grace of the Holy Spirit.*

4:6-8 *And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind.** *and the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Which was, and is, and is to come.*

Some think that by these living creatures should be understood the four elements and God's governance and preservation of them, or God's dominion over the regions of heaven, earth, sea and the underworld. However, as is clear from the further description of the appearance of these living creatures, without doubt they are the very angelic powers who in the mystical vision of the holy prophet Ezekiel (ch. 1:5-25) on the river Chobar, supported the mystical chariot on which the Lord God sits as a King.

These four living creatures have served as it were as emblems of the four Evangelists. The multitude of their eyes indicates the Divine omniscience, the knowing of everything past, present and

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* More simply, perhaps, as St. Andrew also says (ch. 10), the sea of glass (which appears also in Apoc. 15:2, but nowhere else in Scripture) indicates the "undisturbability of the future life" as opposed to the changeability of the stormy sea of this life, from which Antichrist, being of earth, comes (Apoc. 13:1). *(Translator.)*

** Unfortunately, the KJV translates by the one word "beast" two entirely different Greek words: *Zoon*, which is more correctly translated in the Revised Standard Version as "living creatures" (as also in the KJV when it appears in Ezek. 1:5); and *therion* (Apoc. 6:8 , 13:1, etc.) which is more properly "(wild) beast." Therefore, in Apoc. 4:6-9 we have replaced the KJV "beast" with the RSV "living creature." *(Translator.)*

future. These are the highest angelic beings, closest to God (the Seraphim—tr.) who ceaselessly glorify God. (See also Is. 6:2-3).

"These symbols probably signify also the economy of Christ: the lion as king, the calf as chief priest or rather sacrifice, the man as incarnate for our sake, and the eagle as giver of the Life-giving Spirit which descends on us from above" (St. Andrew, ch. 10)*.

"Which was, and is, and is to come signifies the Holy Trinity" (St. Andrew, ch. 10.)**

4:9-11 *And when those living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, Who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him That sat on the throne, and worship Him That liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.*

"The four and twenty elders fall down": These words signify that the elders are participants in the hymns of the heavenly powers and confess that they received from God the power for victory over spiritual enemies.

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* St. Irenaeus of Lyons (2nd century) was the first to identify the four living creatures with the four Evangelists. According to early Orthodox icons (for example, the mosaics in the basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna) the lion is identified with St. Mark, the calf with St. Luke, the man with St. Matthew, and the eagle with St. John. *(Translator.)*

** St. Athanasius the Great says also that "Holy, holy, holy," here also indicates the Holy Trinity and the equality of the Three Persons: "The Triad, praised, reverenced, and adored, is one and indivisible and without degrees. It is united without confusion, just as the Monad also is distinguished without separation. For the fact of those venerable living creatures (Is. 6, Apoc. 4:8) offering their praises three times, saying 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' proves that the Three Hypostases are perfect; just as in saying 'Lord' they declare the One Essence." *(Translator.)*

"They say: Inasmuch as Thou, O Master, art the Cause and Giver of the glorious victory, to Thee should be sent up thanksgiving from all creatures" (St. Andrew, ch. 10).

SCRIPTURE PARALLELS IN CHAPTER FOUR

4:2-3

Ezekiel 1:26-28. *And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of His loins even upward, and from the appearance of His loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord* (KJV).

4:5

Exodus 19:16. *And it came to pass on the third day, as the morning drew nigh, there were voices and lightnings and a dark cloud on Mount Sinai: the voice of the trumpet sounded loud, and all the people in the camp trembled* (Sept.).

4:6-8

Ezekiel 1:5-11. *And in the midst as it were the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: the likeness of a man was upon them. And each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. And their legs were straight; and their feet were winged, and there were sparks, like gleaming brass, and their wings were light. And the hand of a man was under their wings on their four sides. And the faces of them four turned not when they went;*

they went every one straight forward. And the likeness of their faces was the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right to the four; and the face of a calf on the left to the four; and the face of an eagle to the four. And the four had their wings spread out above; each one had two joined to one another, and two covered their bodies (Sept.).

Isaiah 6:1-3. *And it came to pass in the year in which king Ozias died, that I saw the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne, and the house was full of His glory. And Seraphim stood round about Him; each one had six wings; and with two they covered their face, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one cried to the other, and they said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory* (Sept.).

A FORTHCOMING BOOK OF THE
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The Place of Blessed Augustine in the Orthodox Church

by FATHER SERAPHIM ROSE

INTRODUCTION

The late Hieromonk Seraphim was a man of surpassing gentleness and extremely retiring disposition. Although an excellent public speaker and ardent supporter and inspirer of missionary activity, he preferred, in true monastic spirit, the calm silence of his small forest cell on a mountain in northern California. There, working only by candlelight on an old, battered typewriter, he translated and produced some of the most important Orthodox writings available in the English language. He had acquired the spirit of otherworldliness to such an extent that I more than once heard him say, when asked to speak at some important gathering: "This really is not for me." Nonetheless, he of course always forced himself to "speak a word," and his "word" touched hearts and changed lives.

In his personal life he especially shrank from any kind of controversy or disturbance. Whenever passions were likely to be aroused, he wished to be far away. It is ironic, therefore, that this peaceful monk more than once found it necessary to speak out (with the printed word) in defense of an "underdog." An "underdog" was anything or anyone in Church life that he believed was being treated unfairly, uncharitably, arrogantly, or dishonestly, or made to serve the interest of petty politics.

I remember well that summer day in 1978 when Fr. Seraphim asked me to listen as he read aloud a lengthy essay he was preparing on the subject of Blessed Augustine. Comments about this particular Church Father

had been appearing in some publications, the tone of which were often passionately immoderate. No one in the Church had ever before spoken of a Holy Father in this way. It alarmed Fr. Seraphim to see such a worldly and irreverent tone; he saw this as a sign of deep immaturity in Church life today: "We, the last Christians, are not worthy of the inheritance which they (the Holy Fathers) have left us;...we quote the great Fathers but we do not have their spirit ourselves." He asked for a spirit of humility, lovingness, and forgiveness in our approach to the Fathers of the Church, rather than "using" them in a hard and cold manner that showed disrespect and lack of understanding. "Let the test of our continuity with the unbroken Christian tradition of the past be, not only our attempt to be precise in doctrine, but also our *love* for the men who have handed it down to us." In the words of St. Photius of Constantinople, which Fr. Seraphim quoted, we must reject the errors but "embrace the men." Awareness of this principle must pervade all discussions about the Fathers of the Church.

"The basic question," Fr. Seraphim said to me when he was studying Blessed Augustine, "is, what should be the *Orthodox* approach to controversies?"—for controversies do occur in Church life from time to time, allowed by God for our growth and understanding. As the reader will see for himself, Fr. Seraphim found the answer to this question, and gave it clearly in the balanced and, above all, fair study of Blessed Augustine which follows. The Saint's strengths and weaknesses are examined, the opinions of other Holy Fathers on Augustine are consulted and given, and, above all, the *spirit* of the man—whom Fr. Seraphim regarded as a true "Father of Orthodox *piety*...who had a single deeply Christian heart and soul"—is clearly portrayed, perhaps for the first time in the English language.

Fr. Seraphim titled this essay, "The *Place* of Blessed Augustine in the Orthodox Church." He called it this because there are those today who wish to exclude Augustine altogether from the company of Church Fathers—a novel development, to say the least! Some writers boldly—and without justification (other than their own opinion)—call him a "heretic" and unfairly asribe to him almost every subsequent error of Latin and Protestant Christendom. Fr. Seraphim, on the other hand, wanted nothing more than to give a sense of Orthodox *perspective* to this issue, explaining to those who seemed not to know that Blessed Augustine does indeed have a proper "place" in the Church—not, to be sure, among the great Fathers, but nonetheless a position of well-deserved recognition by other Holy Fathers.

BLESSED AUGUSTINE

In 1980, Fr. Seraphim wrote, in a memorial article about one of his own spiritual teachers, Ivan Kontzevitch, that "the poverty of the witness of true Christianity increases, the world grows darker, impiety at times already triumphs openly. Good impulses of the soul wither, sometimes without even being born." But in Blessed Augustine one finds an Orthodox Father who is "kin to all those who are clinging to true Christianity, Holy Orthodoxy, in our own days."

So important is this essay on Blessed Augustine that, when his spiritual father, Abbot Herman, visited Mount Athos, he was thanked by the Athonite monks for having published Fr. Seraphim's work. They were anxious that Orthodox Christians today know that Augustine has an important place in Orthodox theology.

Blessed Augustine was born in Numidia in northern Africa in 354 AD. His mother, St. Monica, tried to instill in him a love of virtue, but he was insensible to all but his own desires. As an adult he fell into the error of Manicheism but was later converted to Orthodoxy by another Holy Father, St. Ambrose of Milan. Ordained to the priesthood, he was consecrated Bishop of Hippo in 395. For thirty-five years he ruled this African diocese wisely, participating in the great questions of his time and attending the councils of African hierarchs. He wrote at least 1,000 books, of which the *Confessions* and *The City of God* are justly renowned and still read today.

Fr. Seraphim often recommended the *Confessions* to his spiritual children—especially for Lenten reading—and himself reread the book at least once a year. He once told me that he had wept when he first read it because he was so inspired by the deep compunction and purity of Augustine's heart. Long before the recent criticisms of Augustine, Fr. Seraphim felt that the *Confessions* could speak to contemporary Orthodox Christians and help to "soften their hearts" grown cold with pride and passion. As few others had done, Augustine spoke feelingly of the soul's need to free itself from the enticements of the world before it could hope to grasp the things of the spirit. This was precisely Fr. Seraphim's own constant message to others. He understood it because *he had himself experienced it* through his much-suffering monastic labors.

This study of Blessed Augustine's "place" in Orthodoxy is part of Fr. Seraphim's legacy to Orthodox Christians today—a legacy that includes many, many books and articles over the years, and many other books and translations yet to be published. But more than anything else, this essay embodies the principle of respect for that which is holy—a principle rapidly disappearing from 20th century Orthodoxy. May the publication

of this essay edify and instruct many thousands of good-hearted, searching people who understand something of the path which Blessed Augustine travelled, and who have heard his words and been changed:

> "Narrow is the mansion of my soul; enlarge Thou it, that Thou mayest enter in...for without Thee what am I to myself except a guide to my own downfall?"

Fr. Alexey Young
Repose of St. Sergius of Radonezh
September 25/October 8, 1982

A Brief Life of Blessed Augustine of Hippo 354 — 430 A.D.

The tremendously instructive and fruitful life of this Western Father of the Church began on November 13, 354, in a small town of Numidia (now Algeria) in northern Africa. His father, Patrick, did not become a Christian until the end of his life, but his mother, St. Monica, blessed her son with the sign of the Cross at his birth and for many years wept and prayed faithfully for his conversion to Christ.

As a youth, Augustine fell into a deeply sinful way of life, patterned after the pagan sensuality of his day. At the age of only 17 he took a concubine and fathered a son. He also possessed a brilliant mind and was easily able to master the pagan learning of his time. At 19 he discovered Cicero and at once conceived an intense longing for truth. But he was also ambitious, and sought to make a name for himself in the academic world. He became

a professor of rhetoric in his home town, then moved on to Carthage, and finally took a position in Rome, the capital of the Western empire.

During his time in Carthage Augustine joined the heretical sect of Manichees (followers of the Babylonian, Mani, who had founded a Gnostic-type of dual religion), bringing a number of his friends with him into this sect. The Manichees led him to despise the Christian Scriptures and regard them as childish fables not to be taken seriously. When he assumed his professorship in Rome, however, he began to see through the Manichees, whose immorality exceeded even his own. He became disillusioned and withdrew from the sect. He began to feel that his search for truth would fail when he went to Milan in 384 to seek the position of provincial governor. He was now ready for God to act upon him. The Bishop of Milan at that time was the great Holy Father, St. Ambrose. He had once been the governor of northern Italy and was chosen Bishop by popular acclamation. His holy death in 397 produced such an out-pouring of faith that five bishops were not enough to baptize the number of converts that appeared the next day desiring the waters of life.

St. Ambrose was a gifte orator and gave homilies regularly in the cathedral. By God's providence Augustine was present during a whole series of homilies on the subject of Holy Scripture; this prompted him to seriously investigate Christianity—a true answer to his mother's prayers. This, and his almost simultaneous discovery of Plato's exalted *Dialogues*, inspired him to begin living a celibate life. Finally he came to St. Ambrose for Baptism, together with his son, on Great Saturday of the year 387. In the forty-three years that remained to him, he labored diligently in the Lord's vineyard and also saw to the careful tending of his own soul. The story of his conversion, movingly told in the *Confessions* (written ten years after his Baptism) is considered a "masterpiece of introspective autobiography, expressed in the form of a long prayer to God...exquisitely told." (Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church;* Penguin Books, 1967; p. 219)

In 388, Augustine returned to Africa where he was soon ordained a priest by popular demand, and then, in 395, consecrated bishop. All of the writings he produced from this moment on show a special love for and preoccupation with Scripture, but he also composed further philosophical works as well as poems, and polemical, dogmatic, and moral and pastoral works, and about 363 sermons and 270 letters—an extensive body of work equalled only by St. John Chrysostom in the East.

As Bishop, Augustine faced and virtually ended the Donatist Schism, already in existence for 85 years, by means of several local Church Coun-

cils. The Council of Carthage in 411 also condemned the heresy of Pelagianism and Augustine was clearly recognized as the primary defender of the Orthodox view. Then he turned his attention to the growing problem of the disintegration of the Roman Empire resulting from the sack of Rome by the Goths. Most pagan citizens—and some Christians, too—believed that the fall of the Empire was because the pagan gods had been ignored by Christianity and were angry. To combat this temptation, Augustine spent fourteen years writing the monumental *City of God*, demonstrating that the Church does not exist for empires and governments, but for the salvation and the Kingdom of God.

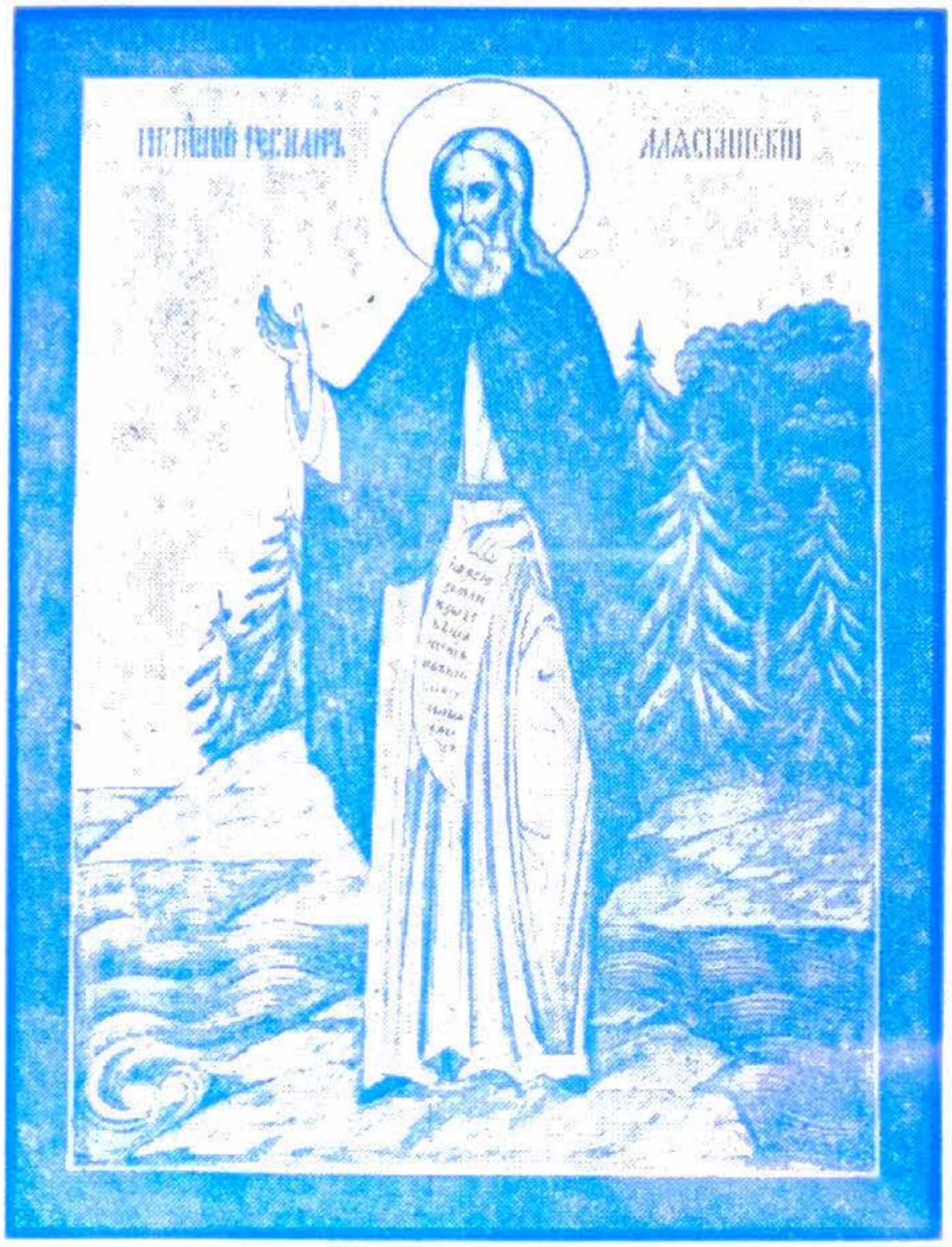
In 426 Augustine retired as bishop but spent his last years in battle with Arianism. On August 28, 430, he died, surrounded by a great concourse of disciples. This man was of such princely heart and mind, and so zealous in the defense of Orthodoxy, that before death he did not fear to review all of his written works, making corrections of errors that had been brought to his attention, and submitting everything to the future judgment of the Church, humbly imploring his readers: "Let all those who will read this work imitate me not in my errors."

Blessed Augustine's message—the message of true Orthodox piety—is one for our times, as he himself wrote in the *Confessions:* "I was slow in turning to the Lord. My life in Thee I kept putting off from one day to the next, but I did not put off the death that daily I was dying in myself. I was in love with the idea of the happy life, but I feared to find it in its true place, and I sought for it by running away from it. I thought that I should be unbearably unhappy if I were deprived of the embraces of a woman, and I never thought of Thy mercy as a medicine to cure that weakness, because I never tried it....I sent up these sorrowful words: How long? How long?... *Why not now*?"

These words are as if written for us, the most feeble Orthodox Christians, for we, too, are in love with the "idea of the happy life," and we do not think of God's mercy, which is a medicine for our weaknesses. May we, being inspired by this good and true Father of the Church, step boldly on to the path which leads to salvation, repeating Blessed Augustine's words: "*Why not now*?"!

A mosaic fresco of St. Augustine, in the Cefalu Cathedral in Sicily.

St. Herman Calendar for 1983



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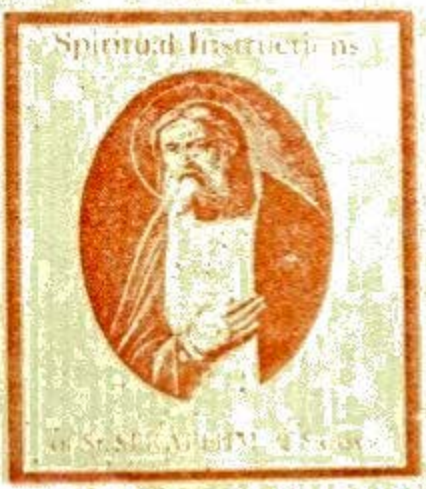

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